CHURCH HISTORY

Chapter 21 - The Church Is Shaken, October 31, 1517

1. *A New Era Opens*
    a. *The Reformation came "in the fullness of time."*
2. *The Sacrament of Penance Becomes Central*
    a. *According to the Roman Catholic Church there are 4 sacraments which deal with the forgiveness and removal of sin and the cancellation of its punishment - baptism, the Eucharist, penance, and anointment of the sick (formerly called extreme unction)*
    b. *In Luther's day the sacrament of penance occupied a central place in Catholic religious practice*
    c. *The heart of this sacrament was the priestly act of absolution (pardoning of sins and release from the eternal punishment upon such sins). It involved three acts by the penitent sinner receiving this sacrament: (1) contrition, (2) confession to a priest, and (5) satisfaction.*
3. *Indulgences*
    a. *certain development took place in this system of penance as the Church permitted the penitent to substitute the payment of a sum of money for other forms of penalty or satisfaction and issue to the penitent an official statement that he had received release from other penalties through payment of money – a document or papal ticket was called an* ***indulgence***
    b. *the trick was to distort the meaning of Matthew 19:21*
    c. *Tetzel, an eloquent Dominican Friar and salesman, was peddling indulgences in an unusually scandalous manner near the Saxony border in the neighborhood of Wittenberg; in his sales talk he said, "The moment you hear your money drop in the box, the soul of your mother will jump out of purgatory."*
4. *Luther's Early Life*
    a. *born in Eisleben, Germany, on November 10, 1483; From the University of Erfurt he obtained his Master's degree in 1505; took up the study of law in the same university. Half-a- year later he suddenly dropped that study and entered the Augustinian monastery in Erfurt*
5. *Luther's Conversion*
    a. *In a letter he wrote to the pope after his conversion he said: "I often endured an agony so hellish in violence, that if those spells had lasted a minute longer I must have died then and there."*
    b. *Sometime toward the end of the year 1512, Luther was sitting in his cell in Wittenberg with his Bible open before him. He had begun to study Paul's letter to the Romans, and coming to Romans 1, verse 17, he read, "The righteous will live by faith."*
6. *The Ninety-five Theses*
    a. *traffic in indulgences had long been the cause of great scandal; Tetzel was hawking indulgences at the very gates of Wittenberg in a most shameless manner*
    b. *around noon on the thirty-first day of October, 15 17, he went out and nailed these ninety-five theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg*
7. *Luther Is Already a Man of High Attainments*
    a. *he was experienced and accomplished far beyond most young men of his age*
    b. *had read and studied the writings of many great men*
    c. *as a Master of Arts and a Doctor of Theology*
8. *He Is Still a Catholic in Good Standing*
    a. *Luther was a monk, an ordained priest, a preacher, and a professor in the Roman Catholic Church when Luther published his ninety-five theses, he was a member in good standing of the Roman Catholic Church*
9. *Posting of Theses Is a Common Practice*
    a. *posting these theses he invited any doctor of theology who might so wish, for the purpose of clarifying the truth, to debate with him publicly on the value of indulgences. This procedure was very common*
10. *The Ninety-five Theses Are Widely Read*
    a. *No man was more surprised than Luther himself at the results of his action. No one accepted Luther's challenge. It was not until two years later that an opponent presented himself but it spread through word-of-mouth*
    b. *Printing had recently been invented. The theses, which had been written in Latin, were translated into many languages, printed, and carried with unbelievable speed to every country of Western Europe*
    c. *In April, 1518, the monasteries connected with the Augustinian Order held their annual meeting in Heidelberg. Luther found the opposition much stronger than he had expected.*
11. *Their Real Significance Is Recognized*
    a. *by raising the question of indulgences, Luther shook the Church*
12. *The Reformation's Fundamental Elements*
    a. *The Reformation leaders went back to the Apostolic Church, as described in the New Testament, to find there the spirit and practice of the Church as they believed it should operate*
    b. *the stress on the priesthood of all believers*
    c. *All the reformers thought of the Church as the community of believers rather than the hierarchy of officials*
    d. *Many church leaders in the days before the Reformation had urged the distribution of the Bible to the common people*